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STANDING COMMITTEE

ON



PRIVILEGES AND ELECTIONS

Chairman: G. Roy McWILLIAM, Esq.

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS AND EVIDENCE

No. 5

TUESDAY, MARCH 22, 1955

CANADA ELECTIONS ACT

WITNESS:

Mr. Nelson J. Castonguay, Chief Electoral Officer.

EDMOND CLOUTIER, C.M.G., O.A., D.S.P.
QUEEN'S PRINTER AND CONTROLLER OF STATIONERY
OTTAWA, 1955.

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

The Senate, Room 262,

TUESDAY, March 22, 1955.

The Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections met at 3.30 o'clock p.m. The Chairman, Mr. G. Roy McWilliam, presided.

Members present: Messrs. Bourque, Cardin, Carter, Cavers, Churchill, Dechene, Dickey, Ellis, Fraser (*Peterborough*), Harrison, Leboe, Lefrancois, MacDougall, McWilliam, Meunier, Nowlan, Perron, Robinson (*Bruce*), Viau, White (*Waterloo South*), and Zaplitny.

In attendance: Mr. Nelson J. Castonguay, Chief Electoral Officer, and Mr. E. A. Anglin, Q.C., Assistant Chief Electoral Officer; Brigadier J. W. Lawson, Judge Advocate General, and Captain J. P. Dewis, R.C.N., Deputy Judge Advocate General, representing the Department of National Defence; Mr. M. H. Wershof, Legal Adviser, and Mr. Giles Sicotte, Chief of the Legal Division, representing the Department of External Affairs.

At the opening of the meeting, the Chairman read to the Committee a communication he had received from the Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Lester B. Pearson. (See today's Evidence, page 135).

The Committee then resumed from the previous sitting of March 17, the discussion of a motion proposed by Mr. MacDougall, in the following terms:

That the Committee approve in principle the extension of the provisions of the Canadian Forces Voting Regulations to wives of servicemen living abroad.

Mr. Cardin moved an amendment to the proposed motion of Mr. MacDougall but, after some debate as to the wording of the said amendment, Mr. Cardin, with leave of the Committee, withdrew his amendment.

And the question having been put on the proposed motion of Mr. MacDougall it was, on a show of hands, resolved in the affirmative on the following division: Yeas, 13; Nays, 2.

Following this, the Chairman read a letter from Mr. J. P. Doherty of Provost, Alberta, addressed to Mr. Castonguay, which the latter earlier had filed with the Committee, concerning Form 35 (See today's evidence, page 143).

The Committee then considered the suggestion that some provisions be made for the exercise of the franchise by Canadians abroad who are members of the public service.

After considerable discussion, Mr. Cardin moved, seconded by Mr. Bourque:

That the Committee approve in principle the enactment of provisions in the Canada Elections Act to allow the exercise of the franchise by Canadians in the federal public service and their spouses residing abroad within the limit of administrative practicability.

Debate having taken place on the proposed motion of Mr. Cardin, and the question having been put thereon, the said proposed motion was, on a show of hands, resolved in the negative on the following division: Yeas, 8; Nays, 9.

It being 5.30 o'clock p.m., the Committee adjourned to meet again at 10.30 o'clock a.m., Thursday, March 24.

Antoine Chassé,
Clerk of the Committee.

EVIDENCE

MARCH 22, 1955
3.30 p.m.

The CHAIRMAN: Gentlemen, we have a quorum, and we will proceed. As you know, at the close of our last sitting there was a motion before us, however before we take any action on that I should like to read a letter received from the Secretary of State for External Affairs:

"THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
CANADA

OTTAWA, March 21, 1955.

Dear Mr. McWilliam:

At the request of our colleague, Mr. Richard, and with your kind permission, the Standing Committee on Elections and Privileges on March 17 heard evidence from Mr. Wershof of this Department, on a proposal to extend the franchise to civilian members of the Canadian Public Service stationed outside Canada, more of whom, I think, come from the Department of External Affairs than from any other department.

I am grateful to the committee for the consideration they have given to this matter. Before the members of the Committee reach a decision, I should like in this letter to state briefly my views on what I regard as the main points.

First, there is an important point of principle involved. It is whether Parliament should endeavour, within the limits of administrative practicability (and I emphasize the word "practicability") to make the exercise of the franchise possible for Canadians in the Public Service of Canada who are serving abroad, temporarily, on the orders of the Canadian government. I suggest that Parliament has already accepted the basic principle by providing for voting abroad by members of the Canadian Armed Forces. It seems to me that it would be fair and reasonable to accept the *principle* in relation to civilians in the Public Service who are also serving their country abroad.

I have nothing to say against the proposal, which the Department of National Defence has submitted to the Committee, that the franchise be extended to wives of Canadian servicemen abroad. However, I do feel, as a matter of principle, that Canadians actually employed by the Canadian Government in other Departments should receive consideration equal to that given to wives of service personnel. Any other course would mean that the wife of a military attaché at, say Bonn, would have an opportunity to vote while our ambassador in the same place would not.

Second, if the principle I advocate is accepted by the Committee, the application of the principle can be limited by common sense and need not involve the Government in any additional expenditures. I am advised that Canadian Government employees in the United States, Mexico and Central America, could be enabled to vote by using the Voting Territories within Canada for service personnel already established by the Act. Canadian Government employees throughout Europe and possibly the Middle East could use the facilities of the Voting Territory with headquarters in London, England, which will undoubtedly be established for service personnel as it was in the

last general election. These facilities, which will be set up in any event for servicemen, can be used without creating new expense. We are not suggesting that any new facilities be set up.—Of course, this would still leave out Government employees in Asia, Africa and South America, but I think that it would be well worthwhile to apply the principle if only where it can be done easily and without creating new and expensive machinery.

I should appreciate it if you would bring this letter to the attention of the Committee, as I am anxious that the position of my Department in this matter should not be misunderstood.

Yours sincerely,

'L. B. Pearson'"

G. Roy McWilliam, Est., M.P.,
House of Commons,
Ottawa.

To resume where we left off, I shall repeat for the information of the committee Mr. MacDougall's motion that was before us just prior to adjournment on March 17th. Mr. MacDougall moves that the committee approve in principle the extension of the provisions of the Canadian forces voting regulations to wives of servicemen living abroad.

I think that somebody wanted to speak to the motion but as our time limit had expired we adjourned at that stage.

Mr. MACDOUGALL: Mr. Chairman, seeing that I moved this resolution just prior to adjournment of the meeting on that date, I feel that I should say something in connection with the motion. I would like it thoroughly understood that I am not speaking to anything other than the motion which I made on that occasion. I would not wish any of the members of the committee to interpret my views in advance as to the position that I am going to take on other matters that may come up before this committee, but only to deal with the motion which I made previous to our last adjournment. I am sure that there are a number in this room who will recall that in the first world war we were given an opportunity of casting ballots on active service. At that time there were not many wives of servicemen living abroad, and certainly none of them were resident within the confines of the ballot area. Invariably the residence of wives of Canadians serving abroad was the United Kingdom, and consequently it was not the concern of either Parliament or the serviceman as to what might or might not be the disposition of a potential vote given to his wife. Now, I am glad to say that the conditions of service have vastly improved by the advancement of our so-called system of warfare, as have the amenities of servicemen and their wives today, in comparison with what they were during the first world war. I really think that it is fair and right that when we have men and women serving abroad in the armed services, the wives of the servicemen should be given the right to cast a ballot in a federal election. One of the predominant factors in this is that we have living conditions today for the men who are living abroad which make it possible for the wives to be housed in a locality exactly similar to that wherein her husband will cast a vote as a member of the active services. No expenditure of additional money would be necessary in giving the wife of a serviceman a vote, because all the facilities for granting the wife the privilege are already there. In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, the likelihood is that she would cast her ballot in precisely the same polling booth as her husband would. So we are not in any way subjecting either the chief electoral officer or the electors of Canada to any additional expense in order that the wife of a serviceman might be able to cast a ballot.

Additionally to that, there is also this problem that if any of us were serving overseas today we would be interested in what is going on in our native or our adopted country, Canada, and I think it is reasonable to surmise that our interest in the welfare of our country would be shared equally by the serviceman and also would be of equal interest to the wife. Consequently it seems to me reasonable and fair that where we now have the opportunity for the serviceman to cast a ballot in a federal election without requiring any additional machinery, the wife of the serviceman might also be allowed to cast a ballot. If I recall correctly, in the last federal election some 289 active service personnel cast ballots in my own riding. Unfortunately, at the time of that election, there were to my knowledge five of the active service personnel home on furlough who were accompanied by their wives—and those wives had been married to the servicemen before they enlisted for active service—but, although the husbands were able to vote, the wives were refused a ballot. I felt rather badly about that.

Now, on that basis, in all fairness, it seems to me that this committee should consider and approve the question of the extension of the franchise to the wives of men serving abroad. I believe that, as a result of that, you would get a higher interest in the affairs of Canada on the part of both the serviceman and his wife, when they know in advance that at the next federal election they would both be able to cast an intelligent ballot on the affairs of their native or adopted country.

In conclusion, I would wish to say that we should consider this problem as a single factor, not in any way at this time embroiling it with any other question which might come up before this committee with respect to absentee ballots. So, sir, I suggest that the committee deal with this either affirmatively or negatively, but I certainly feel that if we consummate the possibility of giving the wives of service personnel abroad a vote, Canada will be the great beneficiary.

Mr. FRASER (Peterborough): Mr. Chairman, I am quite in favour of this motion, but I should like to have a little more information in regard to the qualifications of the soldiers' wives. What is the status of a soldier's wife? Does she have to have a year's residence in Canada?

The CHAIRMAN: I shall call on Mr. Castonguay, the Chief Electoral Officer, to answer that.

Mr. Nelson J. Castonguay, Chief Electoral Officer, called:

The WITNESS: No qualifications for wives have been set by the committee: That would be one of the matters which the committee would have to study if it approved of the principle of giving the privilege of voting to the wives of service men overseas. One simple way to handle it would be to have the wife allocate her ballot to the same place of ordinary residence as that given by her husband in his statement of ordinary residence. That would seem to be the logical way to proceed. Naturally, to vote as a civilian in this country, the wife would have to be a resident in this country for one year before polling day, but in voting overseas it would be a different matter.

Mr. FRASER (Peterborough): That is why I am asking whether wives would be required to have one year's residence in Canada.

The WITNESS: Yes, they would vote in Canada under our present provisions.

Mr. FRASER (Peterborough): I ask that, because I think Mr. Cavers mentioned the qualifications at our meeting the other day. Suppose that a service man overseas married yesterday or the day before, and the voting took place

today. That wife would have no knowledge of the Election Act, no knowledge of Canadians, and no knowledge of anything else with regard to our elections. I just wondered if it would not be suitable to have one year's residence in Canada as a preliminary qualification.

Mr. NOWLAN: I agree with what Mr. Fraser says, I think that the only way in which we can intelligently handle this matter, if we approve in principle the motion of Mr. MacDougall, is to have the Chief Electoral Officer—and I do not envy him in his task—try to draft some sort of machinery whereby this could be carried out. We would have to discuss that in detail, but I do not think this is the place to discuss it now. I am not opposed to the principle. I agree with Mr. MacDougall as to the beneficial results that it will have, but I do not think that the fact that you give the wives the power to vote is going to cure all the ills. It does raise other questions. For instance, if a Canadian serviceman in Germany married a German girl, as many of them do, she has never been here and she is not a Canadian citizen. How is she going to vote? That is one of the matters we will have to consider in detail. The whole situation is going to be revolutionized because at the moment the wife has to vote in the district where she is residing. Take, for instance, my own province of Nova Scotia. The men there have to register on a certain date as to whether they are going to vote there, or where they were serving before, or where they enlisted. The wife has to vote in the same way as any other civilian. She votes in that district if she has lived there for a certain time. If, for example, a man is transferred from Greenwood R.C.A.F. Base to Ontario and marries a girl whom he has known there and then is transferred to Germany and is serving there on election day, his vote would normally be in Nova Scotia, but his wife might be there or might not be. It is a difficult question. I think that the shortest way to deal with it, if we are in favour of the principle, is to pass the principle and then let the electoral officer draft some regulations.

Mr. ELLIS: I quite agree with Mr. Nowlan on that last point. I think that we can accept as a principle the proposition that where the wife would normally be a voter she should be able to vote under the new provision. In other words, if the woman living in Canada would normally be qualified to vote because of residence and citizenship and so forth she would naturally have the vote if she were living with her husband in Germany or in some other part of Europe. I can see the difficulties that have been raised here, but I think that if that principle were valid it would mean that the wife of the service man would have the vote, provided that in normal circumstances she would have the right to vote. The reason why I suggest that is that it has been pointed out that a service man could marry a German girl and an election might be called, say, three months after the marriage. I think that this is generally understood, as members have already said.

The CHAIRMAN: Let us not get too involved with the mechanics of this.

Mr. ELLIS: In other words, we are not proposing to extend the franchise to those who would not be able to exercise the franchise if they were living in Canada. I am stating that as a general principle.

Mr. FRASER (Peterborough): That follows out what I said.

The WITNESS: One of the basic requirements for any elector, whether a Canadian forces elector or a civilian elector, is that first he be a Canadian citizen or other British subject, and I presume that the committee would wish that principle to be carried on. The second is that the person be twenty-one years of age on polling day. I think that probably those two basic requirements could be carried on in regard to the wife, should the committee agree in principle that this privilege be extended to her.

Another matter would be this. If it was agreed that she would apply her vote to the constituency at which her husband made a declaration on enrolment as his place of residence for voting purposes, and she would apply her vote to the same constituency as her husband, it would be an easy method to provide her with voting facilities.

Mr. CARDIN: I agree with Mr. Castonguay. This committee should decide on the principle of allowing the wives of the members of the active forces overseas to vote. Now, I do not think that anyone would seriously deny the right of wives of members of the services to vote. I think that everyone agrees in principle that they should be allowed the vote. However, when dealing with this particular question, even though it goes outside the scope of Mr. MacDougall's motion, I am wondering how we can avoid even at this stage discussing the right of people in the External Affairs Department residing outside of Canada to vote. I have the greatest admiration for people serving in government capacity outside the country. I think we must remember that the Department of External Affairs has in the past few years grown to a considerable extent, and it will continue to do so in the future. Nor do I believe that anyone can honestly say that these men overseas are not doing a good job. They are doing an excellent job, and we may be really proud of our External Affairs personnel. Now, would it not be discrimination if we, for instance, passed Dr. MacDougall's resolution and allowed the franchise to wives of service men overseas, but ignored completely the right of people in the External Affairs department to vote? It seems to me that the principle is equally applicable to one group as to the other. I should not like, for instance, that some measure be taken in parliament whereby we would be actually discriminating against the External Affairs personnel. I realize that there are certain difficulties in the way of extending the franchise to personnel in the External Affairs department, in out of the way places. But some machinery can be set up similar to that used in the armed services. As I said before, the main object of this committee is to decide on the principle of extending franchise and when we decide on the principle, I think that we should at least decide with regard to all these people serving Canada overseas, whether in the armed forces, or wives of service men, or external affairs people, or the wives of external affairs personnel, that they should all be given the right to vote.

Mr. WHITE (Waterloo South): Or anybody else in government service.

Mr. CARDIN: Or anybody else in the government service. Anything that has to do with the machinery or the possibility or the practicability of giving the right to vote to External Affairs people who are far from any central place where they could exercise the right of franchise, would have to be studied so that a practical solution could be arrived at. I do not think that the purpose of Mr. Pearson or anyone here is to put the government to any expense in giving the right franchise to External Affairs personnel. I think the basis of it would be common sense as to whether or not it is feasible to have all the people in the Department of External Affairs given the right to vote.

My main point is this, in deciding the principle of allowing the wives of service men overseas to vote. And refusing to the External Affairs personnel the right to vote, I think we would be committing a serious injustice to the personnel of the External Affairs department, and I think it would be most unfair to them, because they too are serving Canada and are doing a very good job of it.

Mr. ELLIS: Could we not dispose of the first matter, with regard to the wives, and then go on to the second matter? They are two separate matters. Why confuse it?

Mr. CARDIN: I have no objection, but should one resolution pass and the other not pass—supposing that we should vote on one and it is allowed to give the right to vote to wives of service men, and the other one does not pass?

Mr. LEBOE: I do not think the principle is the same. Therefore, I would suggest that we dispense with this.

The CHAIRMAN: There is a motion before the committee. If there is no amendment to that, I shall put the motion.

Mr. CARDIN: I am not trying to put an obstacle in the way of the committee, but I honestly feel that the two questions are in the same field, and I feel justified in proposing an amendment on the grounds that I feel we might eventually lay ourselves open to discrimination against the External Affairs department people. If I may move an amendment, I should like to move that the matter of extending the franchise to Canadians residing abroad, other than members of the armed forces, be referred to the government for further study, and that draft proposed legislation be presented to this committee at the next session of the twenty-second parliament.

The CHAIRMAN: I shall repeat that amendment:

It is moved that the matter of extending the franchise to Canadians residing abroad, other than members of the armed forces, be referred to the government for further study, and that draft proposed legislation be presented to this committee at the next session of the twenty-second parliament.

Mr. ZAPLITNY: I would have to oppose the amendment on two grounds. In the first place, because my understanding was that the committee had already agreed at a previous meeting to deal with the question of the wives of armed services personnel, in principle, and therefore if we entertain this amendment we would be confusing the issue which is before us. In the second place—and I think this is even more serious—if this amendment is passed it would take away something which the terms of reference of this committee have already given to the committee.

The committee has been asked to consider this question at the present time at the present session. If this amendment passes, we are taking out of the terms of reference the question that has been referred to us and asking the government to give it further study. Surely that is not a proper way to proceed. When we have been given a question to consider and pass judgment upon, I think that we should do that. If, at the end of the proceedings of this committee we feel that this is a question which should be referred back to the government for study, then that would be a proper recommendation to make, but certainly not before it has been considered by the committee should we refer a matter back to the government for further study. On those grounds I must oppose the amendment.

Mr. CARDIN: If it would be of any practical use, I would withdraw the amendment and perhaps change the amendment to the effect that we consider both matters at the same time.

Mr. ELLIS: Mr. Chairman, is there any need to? At the last meeting we did not settle anything simply because, although all members are agreed that the wives of service men should be given a vote—there was no difficulty on that point—instead of getting that much settled, we insisted on tying the two together and we did not come to any definite conclusion. I suggest that the way to go about this is to deal first with the question of votes for wives of service personnel and dispense with that matter, and then bring in another motion with regard to External Affairs personnel. The arguments which have been advanced a few moments ago can be advanced at that time. Let us take each matter on its separate merit. That could be used in an argument in trying to drum up support for the second motion.

Mr. CARDIN: The reason for my motion is to avoid any possible discrimination at any time. Although there may be some disagreement on whether or not we are acting on the same principle, I think that we should have an agenda whereby we could compare the principles of one and the other in one discussion. After that we could deal with what to my mind is the most serious objection, the question of the possibility or practicability of giving the franchise to all people in the Department of External Affairs. We would be dividing that discussion into two parts. Then, if we arrive at one conclusion, there is no reason why the committee should not make all distinctions which it felt it should make. We could then go to the next item, which would be the machinery whereby such franchise could be extended to the wives of armed services and to the Department of External Affairs personnel serving overseas.

Mr. LEBOE: It looks as if we are trying to bring the civil servants in on the coattails of the armed services. I think that we should deal with one and get along with it.

The CHAIRMAN: The minister suggested three groups: (a) Canadians residing abroad who are not in the public service; (b) Canadians abroad who are members of the public service, such as the officers of our missions in foreign countries, and so on; and (c) wives of the members of the Canadian forces who reside abroad with their husbands. The committee should deal with each one individually and then, when we come to make our report, they can deal with that question.

Mr. BOURQUE: Could I ask a question of Mr. Castonguay? The letter which we have received emphasized the question of the practicability of securing this vote. We should ask Mr. Castonguay for instance, what would be the expense if we included the wives of members of the services, with the soldiers, so that they could vote reasonably. Mr. Cardin referred to Canadians residing abroad. Does he mean all Canadians residing abroad?

Mr. CARDIN: No.

Mr. BOURQUE: It would be very difficult if you have a man living in the Orient. I think you had in mind more the members of the service abroad?

Mr. CARDIN: Yes.

Mr. BOURQUE: You did not mean everybody who might be abroad?

Mr. CARDIN: Those working for the government.

Mr. BOURQUE: If you say Canadians residing abroad you are including everybody.

The CHAIRMAN: Everybody knows it would be impossible to set up voting machinery to take care of everybody.

If we are asked to vote on an amendment which takes in Canadians residing abroad who are in the service of the Canadian government then that narrows it down.

Mr. FRASER (*Peterborough*): Why just the Canadian government? Why not also the provincial governments?

Mr. ELLIS: A situation could very well arise where a member of this committee might be in favour of the original motion but might vote against the amended motion. That is the difficulty we run into if we pursue the policy of trying to link the two together. There were three separate provisions in the amendments which I suggest should be dealt with as three separate matters. I have my doubts actually that the amendment is in order because the motion calls for the granting of votes to wives of Canadian servicemen abroad. Now, an amendment is introduced which deals with a different matter altogether and

I have my doubts as to whether this amendment is in order. If it should be declared in order by the chair I must oppose it.

Mr. BOURQUE: Mr. Cardin brought this in because he does not want to discriminate against anyone and if he wants the people in the service which pertains to the government of Canada then he would not want any discrimination between the soldiers' wives and the ambassador's wives. If you brought it in to cover them all you will not discriminate against anyone.

Mr. HARRISON: My understanding on these questions would be that we do not disenfranchise anybody who we think reasonably should have a vote and there are some doubts as to whether individuals outside of this country would come within that classification. If my memory serves me correctly I think there was mention at one time of some 112 school teachers who are serving in our armed forces establishment overseas and I do not see much reason why they could not be included with the servicemen's wives because they are on those stations and I presume that when Mr. Castonguay is setting up the mechanics of this thing he could say for the purpose of the Act that these service stations overseas are for the purpose of election day, part of Canada. School teachers could quite easily be taken in with the servicemen's wives. They are people who could quite easily be included without infringing on the proposition that we should have everybody who is a Canadian vote that it is reasonably possible that they do so.

Mr. BOURQUE: Is it not a fact that these teachers would come under the government just the same because the government is subsidizing them and indirectly pays the salaries; they would come in the same as any other Canadian citizen.

The CHAIRMAN: Do you wish to withdraw your amendment, Mr. Cardin, or do you wish action on your amendment?

Mr. CARDIN: Mr. Chairman, if I may just repeat that I believe a distinction is being made between the right for the wives of service personnel and the right for the Department of External Affairs personnel to vote. We are dealing with one and the same problem and I feel it should be discussed and decided upon together. There may be other groups of people who are living outside of Canada who might have a right to vote, but where the machinery would be impossible to set up. However, under the circumstances it would seem that the thing for me to do would be to withdraw my amendment with the sincere hope that the civil service personnel abroad will equally be given the right to vote.

The CHAIRMAN: We will put Mr. MacDougall's motion. Mr. MacDougall's motion is as follows:

That the committee approve in principle the extension of the provisions of the Canadian forces voting regulations to wives of servicemen living abroad.

Are you ready for the question?

Those in favour please signify by raising your hand? 13. Those against? 2. Carried.

Mr. NOWLAN: It is carried with the understanding that I have the reservation to see the draft regulations and see how practically it works out.

Mr. BOURQUE: Would it be in order for Mr. Cardin to make his motion now on the other part which he had in mind and we could have discussion now to have it approved in principle that the people from the Department of External Affairs and other departments come in on this?

Mr. NOWLAN: Perhaps I could suggest, Mr. Cardin, that you might instead of saying "Canadians residing abroad" put in "who are members of any Canadian government whether it be municipal, federal, provincial or otherwise".

The CHAIRMAN: While Mr. Cardin is drafting his motion I will read a letter which was received by the Chief Electoral Officer:

Mar. 14, 1955.

Mr. Castonguay,
Chief Electoral Officer,
Ottawa, Ont.

Dear Sir:—

As the session is now sitting it may be a good time to call attention to changes in the Election Act. Form 35 should be eliminated for the simple reason that it often causes a voter to mark for the wrong candidate. It did on several occasions at our last election. A better way would be to force the D.R.O. to show the voter where to place his mark and what it should be. I mean to read out the candidate's names, and show him where these names are on the ballot.

Another change is the transferable ballot for western Canada. The three party system is pretty strong here and many were elected by minority vote in all the western provinces.

Just at present the provincial government is feeling shaky and it will be no surprise to see them return to the old system next year and be reelected by minority vote.

Thanking you for the favor,

(J. P. Doherty) Box 92, Provost, Alta.

Mr. CARDIN: I wonder if the committee would consider this motion: I move that the committee approve in principle the enactment of provisions to allow the exercise of the franchise by members of the public service residing abroad within the limit of administrative practicability.

The CHAIRMAN: Is that motion clear?

I will read again what was suggested by the minister in the three groups in regard to extending the vote:

- (a) Canadians residing abroad who are not in the public service;
- (b) Canadians abroad who are members of the public service, such as the officers of our missions in foreign countries or in countries of the Commonwealth;
- (c) Wives of the members of the Canadian forces who reside abroad with their husbands.

Mr. BOURQUE: If we said "Canadians in the public service residing abroad and their wives" that would include everyone who has a position with any government.

Mr. ZAPLITNY: Or their wives.

Mr. CARDIN: I have no objection to that.

Would the committee allow me to work on this and bring it back before the committee at the next meeting?

Mr. BOURQUE: I wonder if it should be dropped now. The only thing I am interested in is that there should not be any discrimination and if we deal with it now when we have it all cleared in our minds I feel we can discuss it more intelligently.

Mr. CARDIN: I think it would be much better if some time is spent on trying to have a wording that would cover exactly what we wished to cover.

The CHAIRMAN: I think that it would be helpful to the committee if I was to call upon the Chief Electoral Officer to see if he can give the committee any light on this thing.

Mr. MACDOUGALL: Before that comes up and before Mr. Cardin has redrafted his amendment, I feel that if you make this applicable only to the members of the Department of External Affairs you are bringing about a condition of extreme discrimination because not only do we have Department of External Affairs personnel serving abroad but we have personnel in practically all departments of government, with some exceptions I will admit, who are also serving abroad; for instance those who are serving in the Department of Trade and Commerce. What are they going to say to the question of their being in a position in Europe where the members of the Department of External Affairs have a vote and they are discriminated against and do not have the ballot.

Mr. WHITE (Waterloo South): It is all people in the public service.

Mr. MACDOUGALL: Then you have not only to take in all departments of the federal government but you have got to take in the civilians serving abroad on the railroads of Canada, in the banks of Canada, in the insurance companies of Canada and in the companies of all industry in Canada who have personnel serving abroad. I suggest then without any reflection on the idea of Mr. Cardin that that would be the rankest kind of discrimination. Additionally on top of that you would also bring about a condition in Canada whereby if his suggestion were adopted in principle you would have to bring about in federal elections within the realm of Canada an absentee ballot or you are going to discriminate against your own people.

Mr. WHITE (Waterloo South): He is attempting to break it into sections.

Mr. MACDOUGALL: Are you going to include in the motion all categories in the public service?

Mr. BOURQUE: You will be free to bring in another motion covering these people whom you mentioned.

Mr. ZAPLITNY: I regret to do this because I am not disagreeing with the hon. member, but what are we discussing? Is there a motion at the present time?

The CHAIRMAN: I think the committee are giving Mr. Cardin some time in which to draft his motion which I believe is to decide on the principle of extending the franchise to public servants residing abroad and their wives.

Mr. ZAPLITNY: I understand that there is no motion before the committee now.

The CHAIRMAN: No, there is not.

Mr. ZAPLITNY: What is the subject matter before the committee now?

The CHAIRMAN: This committee gave Mr. Cardin a few minutes to re-draft his motion.

Mr. CARDIN: The committee, I believe, granted me the opportunity to bring my motion before the next meeting.

Mr. ELLIS: The principle is not too involved here. I cannot see that any purpose is to be solved in deferring this to another meeting. This matter has been discussed at this meeting. The principle can be pointed out in simple language. I hope that we do not confuse the separate issues; first the granting of the franchise to personnel of the Department of External Affairs and others residing abroad and the three points brought up by the chairman earlier that

this might be extended to include Canadians serving abroad working for commercial companies and so on. Certainly, I think we should restrict ourselves now to a brief motion to cover this issue of the granting of the franchise to the members of the Department of External Affairs or putting it broader, Canadian government employees residing abroad in the normal course of their duties.

Mr. CARDIN: That is what is in the back of my mind.

Mr. LEBOE: Could we not deal with the first one in principle?

The CHAIRMAN: That seems to be a pretty good suggestion. Could we deal in principle with the first one and in the meantime Mr. Cardin can get his motion in shape for presentation. Is it agreeable to the committee that we discuss in principle the extending of the vote to wives of service personnel?

Mr. FRASER (*Peterborough*): You were going to ask the Chief Electoral Officer to speak to us on this question.

The WITNESS: In respect to this class of Canadians residing abroad who are not members of the public service or wives of members of the Canadian armed forces, I submit, Mr. Chairman, that you could not take their vote under the mechanism of the Canadian Forces Voting Regulations because the basis of the Canadian Forces Voting Regulations is a statement usually filed by members of the Forces before the election as to their place of residence for voting purposes—the same principle as a permanent list where an elector applies to be on a list and if he should be absent such elector could vote through the facilities that can be attached to a permanent list, whether it is absence from within the constituency or outside the constituency, within Canada or outside Canada. The normal safeguards would be to have some declaration as to where the Canadian citizen residing abroad has a right to apply his vote, and the only way that can be done is by some statement made by such elector prior to the issue of the writ ordering an election, on which he declares and substantiates his place of ordinary residence for voting purposes. When a Canadian enlists in the forces he makes such a statement and sets out therein his place of residence for voting purposes which is his place of ordinary residence prior to his enlistment and he has that until such time as he changes it. In December of any year he may change that declared place of residence provided it is accompanied by a physical change of residence.

Now, to extend facilities to Canadian citizens who are not members of the public service or wives of members of Canadian forces, would involve in my opinion the adoption of permanent lists as your basis for such facilities. The elector would have to register in a constituency so he can apply to vote there. But, I would suggest that to give that elector the choice after an election is ordered would leave the door open for abuses. It would be very difficult to satisfactorily establish the place of ordinary residence of such a person after the writs are issued. In other countries where they have such facilities there is a permanent list.

I am sorry to repeat this subject of permanent list but that is the only way in which you can provide facilities for people voting not only when they are absent from their own polling division in Canada, but also when absent outside the country. The Canadian Forces Voting Regulations are in essence a permanent list, and at headquarters in Ottawa there are statements of ordinary residence of all members of the Canadian forces and with the serviceman's documents there is also a copy of his statement of ordinary residence. The commanding officer of the unit prepares the list of electors in his unit from such statements and electors can only apply their votes to the place of ordinary residence given on their statements. If you wish to extend such facilities to civilians abroad or to civilians in Canada who are absent from their polling

division it cannot in my opinion be done without first adopting a system of permanent lists. It is only with such a system that these facilities can be provided and that normal safeguards can be furnished. A safeguard must be provided to ensure that an elector would cast his vote in an electoral district in which he would be qualified to vote and that the postal envelope when it is received by the returning officer of the constituency can be verified as coming from an elector qualified to vote in such constituency.

Picture a candidate with a majority of two hundred votes on the night of the election who walks into the returning officer's office a few days later and finds 1500 postal ballots on the returning officer's desk still to be counted. I am sure that he would like to know where these came from and whether they came from qualified electors of the electoral district. It is not only a question of protecting the candidate, but it is also a question of protecting the votes cast in the constituency. Those 1500 postal votes may offset the results of the votes that were cast in each polling division of that electoral district. I would like to see some safeguard to ensure that those 1500 postal ballots came from electors qualified to vote in that electoral district. The only way you could do that would in my opinion be with a permanent list.

Then there is another factor. Those may well be sent in the name of the electors in the constituency, and the only way you can check to see if the postal ballot comes from a bona fide elector is to compare the signature on the postal envelope with the signature on the original application of the elector for registration in that electoral district. Having been satisfied that the signatures compare, the returning officer refers to the poll book where that person would normally vote and see if somebody else has voted in his name. These checks having been made, it is quite safe to count those postal ballots, but these facilities cannot safely be extended unless there are such safeguards. I respectfully suggest that those safeguards are essential to protect the vote in the constituency and to protect the candidates.

Mr. CAVERS: I take it from Mr. Castonguay's statement that it is not reasonable for us to suggest that the franchise should be extended either to the wives of personnel or to those persons who are civilians living outside Canada.

The WITNESS: I was merely speaking of Canadian citizens who are not members of the public services or wives of members of the Canadian forces. Insofar as wives of members of the Canadian forces and insofar as federal public servants are concerned, it is feasible and practicable to bring them within the confines of the facilities provided in the Canadian Forces Voting Regulations. I stress "federal public servants" because, if it were extended to provincial and municipal employees, how could we collect statements of ordinary residence from such employees serving outside the country? There are certain difficulties even in collecting the statements from federal public servants, but it could be done, as there is some control. However, for provincial and municipal employees or others serving outside of Canada, a system of permanent lists would be essential to provide those facilities. The mechanics of the Canadian Forces Voting Regulations can only be applied to take the votes of wives of Canadian service men and of federal public servants abroad.

Mr. ROBINSON (Bruce): Is it necessary to have a permanent list to allow proxy voting?

The WITNESS: No, it is not necessary, but it would depend upon what sort of proxy voting the committee would like to have.

The form of proxy voting that exists in Ontario, which is the only province that has proxy voting, for mariners, is that the mariners apply to the

revising officer and appoint a proxy who is an elector of that constituency. The proxy voter has two votes, one for himself and one for the person who appointed him the proxy voter.

Mr. HARRISON: In the light of what Mr. Castonguay told us with regard to those who reasonably do qualify, where do those 112 teachers who are provincial employees stand? I understand, Mr. Chairman, that these girls are all good-looking.

The WITNESS: As Brigadier Lawson mentioned, they are not members of the Department of National Defence. I may be wrong, but as I understood it, they are not members of the federal public service. It would be very difficult to get statements of residence from them.

Mr. LEBOE: Is it not a fact that we have come to the point where we are saying in effect that there are difficulties standing in the way of adopting the principle? We are saying that possibly the External Affairs personnel and all federal public servants fall within the principle, because we can look after them. Other people who would naturally fall within that principle are not to be able to vote because we are not going to have the machinery to let them vote. Is that not what we are saying? The principle is the same in either case, that it is due to the fact that we have almost insurmountable difficulties in the way of extending the franchise to Canadians who are, say, working for some large firm outside the public service. That is what we are saying in effect.

The WITNESS: Yes, the existing facilities could take care of the wives of Canadian forces and federal public servants, but if the committee wishes to provide the machinery of a permanent electoral list, it would also provide the facilities for those who are absent within the country or absent outside of the country, but the permanent electoral list, as I explained on another occasion to the committee, was tried in 1934 and was not a success. With the permanent electoral list you have a closed list in the rural areas. There would be roughly three million changes a year to make to a list of nine million electors, changes such as of people coming of age, changes of address, people becoming Canadian citizens and entitled to vote, deaths, and so on. It would require a very large clerical staff to bring those changes up to date so that the list would be up to date whenever an election is ordered. With the permanent list, naturally, you can provide absentee voting facilities. However, there are many features of the permanent list which I am sure the committee would not like too much. It is not a cure-all for all problems which face the committee.

The CHAIRMAN: We will deal now with the second group.

Mr. CARDIN: Before I read my motion, I would like to say that what crosses my mind is this. I wonder whether we would be justified in refusing the right of franchise to a group of people where the franchise could practically be obtained, simply because there is another group of Canadians outside of Canada who would equally have the right to vote but where the machinery is impossible to set up. It is on this basis that I want to read my motion:

That the committee approve in principle the enactment of provisions in the Canada Elections Act to allow the exercise of the franchise by Canadians in the federal public service and their spouses, residing abroad, within the limits of administrative practicability.

The CHAIRMAN: Are you ready for the question?

Mr. ZAPLITNY: No, Mr. Chairman, I am opposed to this motion, too. With all due respect to the mover of the motion and the reasons he has given, we must remember that the gentleman who moved this motion has expressed the opinion that we should not exercise any discrimination. I think that we

go along with that, but this would be exercising a discrimination that would be almost as serious as the type which Mr. Cardin himself mentioned. For example, I see no reason why a person who is an employee of a government in Canada, whether it be a federal government or a provincial government should be entitled to any more consideration than a person who is employed privately. He is no more a Canadian citizen by virtue of the fact that he is an employee of the Canadian government. If we find that it is not practicable, and it appears that it is not, to extend voting privileges to Canadian citizens generally outside Canada, then by virtue of that same argument I see no reason why we should pick out one group just because they happen to be employed by the government and give them the privilege. It may be argued that we have agreed in principle to extend the privilege to the wives of members of the armed services and that therefore we have created a precedent, but it must be remembered that members of the active services on active duty are ordered outside of Canada for duty. Once they have enlisted, they are not in a position to choose where they serve. They serve where they are asked by the government to serve. That is not the case with government employees, any more than it is the case with persons employed by private corporations. If a person is employed, say, by the Canadian Bank of Commerce and he was asked to take employment say, in Argentina, he has the choice of either taking it or refusing it. If he would rather stay in Canada he would say, "No". The same applies to persons serving in the Department of External Affairs. If a person does not wish to leave the country and accept that employment, there is no law in Canada that says he must accept that employment. He is not conscripted for duty; he is asked to accept that employment. He does it voluntarily knowing that he has to leave the country in order to keep that employment, but on that basis I see no argument whatever that would appear sound to me why we should pick out persons simply because they happen to be government employees and give them a privilege which cannot be extended to other Canadian citizens who are abroad. On that basis I would oppose the motion.

Mr. MACDOUGALL: It seems to me that Mr. Castonguay, the Chief Electoral Officer, has really put his finger on the major stumbling block in this matter. That is the lack of a permanent electoral list. I agree 100 per cent with everything he has said. I agree also with what Mr. Zaplitny has said. It follows along what I said a few moments ago, that you are bringing in a condition of discrimination which I do not think any of us can justify. Now, it is all very well that it would not be along the lines of practicability. Well, who is going to say what is the end of the rope of practicability?

Additionally, there is this other factor, that we first of all discriminate between a federal employee or a provincial employee, to say nothing about the discrimination which would be brought about by all the corporations who have personnel abroad, such as banks, railroads and private businesses. Now, I think it is going to take a very fine line of demarcation to differentiate between what is practical and what is impractical. When my good friend Mr. Cardin spoke a little while ago, he expressed great admiration for the personnel of the Department of External Affairs. I hold an equal admiration for the personnel of the External Affairs department—make no mistake about that—and I think there are a number of us in this committee who feel the same way, but we do come to the end of the rope on the practicability of this question. When you categorize federal employees, as opposed to those who are employed by private industry or provincial governments, serving abroad outside the boundaries of Canada, I think that we would be taking a step that would hurt more than it would help the general morale of all Canadians serving abroad, whether they are federal, provincial, private or other employees. I think we must keep constantly before us who is going

to draw the line between practicability and impracticability. That brings us back to the point made by the Chief Electoral Officer, where he says almost in as many words, that if you do this there is only one way in which you can do it and that is by the adoption of a permanent list. Personally, I think it would get us into a great deal of trouble. Without wishing to oppose my hon. friend in this matter, if it comes to a vote, I am afraid that I am going to have to oppose the motion.

Mr. CARDIN: I will be very sorry to see my good friend vote against the first motion that I have ever made. Mr. Chairman, I think that the basis of the argument revolves around the word "discrimination" and what we understand by discrimination. I appreciate very much the arguments which were made by my friend Mr. Zaplitny, who stated, in passing my motion, that we would be discriminating against those Canadians who are not in the categories mentioned and who would not have the right to vote. But I wonder whether it would not be considered discrimination if we refused to give the right of franchise to these public servants living outside Canada, where it can be obtained. That to my mind would be discrimination. The Chief Electoral Officer has said that it is possible to provide a franchise to federal public servants living outside of Canada. But if we do not give them that right of franchise, then it is discrimination.

But you cannot in any way claim that we are discriminating against someone when it is impossible to give them the right of franchise. I think that the people in that particular class who are Canadian citizens living outside of Canada would certainly be able to make a distinction between what is possible and what is impossible. I believe that it is only fair to say that you cannot have discrimination wherever the franchise is impossible. Further, I might say that there is no reason on earth why a study group could not be set up to see whether or not it would be feasible or practicable to find some way of extending the franchise to all Canadians living outside Canada. That is one side of the question.

I still maintain that you cannot say it would be causing discrimination against people who cannot possibly vote. I would also like to say this. Mr. Zaplitny claimed that the members of the armed forces were in a different class in that they were sent abroad, and that they had no choice in the matter. It also appears that in the public service you do not always have a choice. The personnel is sent out to different posts.

Mr. ZAPLITNY: Would you permit a question? Is it not a fact that you do have a choice in this respect, that you may refuse the employment that is offered?

Mr. CARDIN: That is so. However I think that is a relatively unimportant point. The basis of the whole thing is on this question of discrimination. That has been the basis of the whole discussion.

Mr. ELLIS: Would you permit me a question?

Mr. CARDIN: Yes.

Mr. ELLIS: Would you say that it would be easy for people to distinguish in this matter? In parts of the world where the machinery could not be set up it would mean that there is no discrimination, but what is going to happen in Germany, for example, where there are a number of employees of Canadian companies who reside in the same district and in the same community as federal civil servants? When election time comes around and a certain group of Canadians, simply because they earn their money by working for the government, can vote, whereas other Canadian citizens, because they work for non-governmental employers, are denied the vote, you cannot say it would be impossible to give them the vote under the circumstances.

Mr. CARDIN: I think the people whom the honourable member has mentioned are equally as intelligent as we are. We can understand that in regard to the government service there is the equivalent of a permanent list, whereas that facility does not exist for all Canadians living outside Canada. I think that the people will understand that. I would also encourage every kind of study on the part of the Chief Electoral Officer to see if there would not be any machinery that could be set up. I know that he has given a great deal of thought to it, but a little more might help. We do not want to give the impression that we are giving up hope with regard to the many Canadian citizens living abroad. I think we may eventually come to the point where we can arrange some method of giving them the franchise. But I do not think it is fair to prevent public servants living outside Canada from voting when we already have the facilities to allow them to vote.

Mr. MACDOUGALL: It has been pointed out that residents of the District of Columbia in the United States are disfranchised. There must have been some legitimate reason why that was done.

Mr. CARDIN: I do not intend to inquire as to why they were disfranchised in the District of Columbia, and I do not think it is fair to pick out all the small exceptions in what I believe is a discussion of general principles.

Mr. ELLIS: There has been a great deal of talk about discrimination. When we speak of denying the franchise to Canadians abroad, I am reminded of the fact that we deny the franchise, every time an election is called, to hundreds of thousands of people in Canada. I know that in my own constituency there are hundreds of people who are obliged to go out on construction projects, for example, which may take them 200 or 300 miles from home. They could not go to the advance poll. The advance poll only serves the needs of a very limited number. You will find in every constituency and every election there will be a few thousand people who cannot vote on election day.

Mr. CARDIN: I hate to interrupt my friend, but we are discussing, as I understand it, the right of franchise for people residing outside Canada. I have no objection to working out a solution or some kind of method that would answer my honourable friend's problem. I realize that it exists, but I do not think that this is the time or place to discuss it.

Mr. ELLIS: The reason that has been put forth for supporting this principle is the fact that certain Canadians are not being given the right to vote. Now I suggest that, using that same line of argument, by following that same logic, you have to arrive at a point where you are prepared to support a wholesale change in the electoral laws of the country, to provide the vote not just for those Canadians who happen to be living abroad, but also for those Canadians who, in the normal course of their jobs are away from their constituencies on election day. So it is useless arguing about discrimination, because it is being done in a wholesale manner in this country.

The CHAIRMAN: You made that point at our last meeting, and I think you made it quite clear. I think it is appreciated by all the members of the committee. Now we should deal with this motion.

Mr. ELLIS: You say that I made this point at the last meeting. Perhaps to a certain extent I did, but nonetheless it is just as valid today as it was at that time. But I think it is more necessary to pursue that argument now because of the arguments that have been raised in committee today. At the last meeting I thought there was a somewhat different attitude of mind among certain members of the committee. I find that it has been changed. I think, therefore, that my argument is quite valid, and I am stating that for the reason that I am opposing this motion. I am in favour of granting the franchise wherever possible to every Canadian who is qualified to vote. But I say

that if we are going to support providing voting rights for Canadians who are living abroad, then by the same token we have to do the same thing for people in this country. In other words, nothing short of an over-all solution to this problem is going to be satisfactory. Therefore, until such time as this is bound up with the whole problem of votes for absentee electors on election day, I am going to oppose this motion.

And Hon. MEMBER: I suggest that we adjourn now.

The CHAIRMAN: The steering committee agreed to sit for two hours and not to go beyond the two-hour limit. We have been sitting now for one hour and 35 minutes. I think we can deal with this matter today.

By Mr. Bourque:

Q. The matter of the District of Columbia has been brought up. If, as, and when we have a federal district in Ottawa, we can deal with that question. I understood Mr. Castonguay to say that the mechanics could be arranged, but at what cost, and how practical would it be? Utopia has not been reached yet, and I do not think we are going to reach Utopia here, but what I had in mind was the displacement that takes place with all the companies in the personnel going back and forth. Mr. Castonguay has said that in regard to the federal government employees a list can be obtained very reasonably and fast. But can we get a list of the others on time so that there will be no discrimination? If we cannot get the list, we would discriminate against possibly 50 per cent of the people who are abroad. The other 50 per cent would vote, but we must bear in mind that for the federal government employees, as Mr. Castonguay has said, the list is available and, therefore, the cost would not be prohibitive. Mr. Castonguay, could you tell us this in approximate figures? If we were to take everybody abroad who should be included, what would be the cost approximately that you would have to bear to prepare that list?—A. With regard to providing the facilities to these federal public servants within the confines of the Canadian Forces Voting Regulations, it would mean in costs just extra envelopes and extra ballots, provided that the same principle in the Regulations of appointing polling officials was carried forward to the missions. If it were confined to federal public servants, and confined to territories established for the Canadian forces electors, the cost would be just for the extra forms required.

Q. Negligible. But if we take in everybody?—A. Then we are going back to my initial explanation to the committee that it is a matter of bringing in a system of permanent lists throughout the country. That would be very expensive, because with a permanent list you must have at least a biennial house to house revision, on the same basis as an enumeration for present elections. I would say that a biennial revision for a permanent list would cost about \$4 million a year.

Q. And you would not be sure that you would get everybody?—A. That is just to pay the enumerators to collect the names. You would have to have a staff of at least a thousand clerical workers to record the changes that would have to be made to the permanent list. My estimation would be three million changes a year, and I would think that it would take a personnel of at least one thousand to handle these changes so that the list would be up-to-date at all times. A permanent list would be an expensive proposition.

Q. Have you any idea: supposing we spend \$4 million for enumerators; if you are going to have all the paraphernalia which goes with it, it may amount to \$8 million; how many votes would that cover?—A. Facilities would also be provided for Canadians who are absent within Canada. General overall cost is a very hard thing to arrive at. I would say that the biennial house to house revision would be \$4 million a year; and I would say that the staff costs would

be about \$2 million a year. You would have to have 263 permanent registrars throughout the country in offices. You would have to decentralize my office, and have electoral officers for various regions such as the western provinces, one for Ontario, one for Quebec and one for the Maritimes; and you would find that you would be creating an administrative monster.

Q. It would be a gigantic proposition?—A. The overall cost would be around \$30 million.

Q. How many votes would it mean 4 million votes?—A. We never figure the cost on the basis of votes. You make expenditures on the basis of the total number electors; you are providing facilities for the maximum number electors; and in the last election there were $8\frac{1}{2}$ million electors.

Q. This extra cost would cover how many voters?—A. Potentially nine million voters whether residing in or out of the country. Our present costs run around 70 cents an elector, for the enumeration, the printing of the list, and the polling facilities.

Q. It would run to about \$3.50 an elector; that would be about 5 times what it now costs, and on the basis of 8,500,000 electors it would cost over \$30 million.—A. The cost is a serious factor, but with a permanent list you have two fixed periods of revision; for example you would have the period from the 1st of April to the 21st of April and from the 1st of October to the 21st of October; the revision takes place during such periods, and in between the two you cannot get on or off the list. Another difficulty could be that the revision is from the 1st of April to the 21st of April and the election is ordered for September, which would mean that a period of more than four months would intervene between the last day of revision April 21 to polling day in September and there would be no way of getting on the list or off the list; and also in rural areas there would be no vouching system.

Q. Should the amount, as you say, be increased, it would go from \$6 million now to about \$30 million which would be about 500 per cent more, if you made a list complete for everybody.—A. And provide facilities for those who are not only absent from their polling places but who are also outside the country.

Q. If it becomes a question of whether the cost is prohibitive, would we be justified in trying to provide these people with the franchise, when possibly 50 to 60 per cent of them would not vote?

. The CHAIRMAN: I think we are getting away from the point.

Mr. BOURQUE: I am talking about people who would get the franchise who are everywhere, as well as those who are moving about.

Mr. LEBOE: If we support this motion I feel we are giving up a principle for an expediency. I shall oppose the motion on that ground.

Mr. CAVERS: I think I have already made myself clear with regard to the distinction between government employees and those who are employees of commercial enterprises, but I also have another thought which I think is important and which should come to the attention of the committee. How are we going to define who are government employees? Are we going to confine it solely to the departments of the government as we understand them here, or are we going to extend it to officials of the various crown corporations which have been set up, such as Polymer and the many other companies, such as Trans Canada and the Canadian National Railways. It seems to me that we are getting ourselves into a position where the chief electoral officer says that his administrative costs are going to be higher than that in trying to figure out who has the right to vote.

The CHAIRMAN: All those in favour?

Mr. BOURQUE: The chief electoral officer said it would be very easy for him to get the federal list, and it would be no hardship, and that the costs would be negligible. But if we are to give ground for crown companies and everything, the cost will begin to be prohibitive, and we shall find ourselves in possession of a monster.

Mr. CAVERS: Are these people government employees or employees of crown companies?

Mr. BOURQUE: They are not. You could not say that a man from the Canadian National Railways is a government employee.

Mr. CHURCHILL: We can become exercised over the voting privileges for people living outside Canada. On the face of it, it appears a little more serious than it really is. When Mr. Wershof was here the other day, I asked him what the term of service was for federal government employees overseas from the Department of External Affairs. I think he said that it averaged three years, and that some were overseas without returning to Canada for as many perhaps as fifteen years or more.

If arrangements are to be made for people who are away from Canada for a very lengthy period like that, we would have to give a little serious consideration to it; but if the average term of service is only three years, a great many people will put in their term of service in between elections and we need not worry about them at all.

Those who are absent from the country at the time of an election will, on the basis of that average term of service, miss only one federal election. I do not think that it is overly serious to miss your vote at a federal election. It happens to a great many people living in Canada. It may be that many of us here have had that experience. I know that I have had it three times in Canada through no fault of my own. It so happened that I moved at the wrong time with regard to a federal election. Consequently I was deprived of my vote. So I think we are magnifying a little bit the problem of people who happen to be outside Canada at the time of a federal election.

However, I would like to give more consideration to this matter. I understood from Mr. Castonguay that it is possible to establish a permanent list for wives of service men, as already dealt with and for federal government employees overseas or those who are out of the country. But as was pointed out, it raises many other problems which it seems to me are of much greater magnitude. Then there is this to consider: the right to vote is certainly important and we would like every citizen of Canada to exercise it. Yet we know perfectly well that they do not.

As my good friend Mr. Nowlan said to me a few minutes ago: when you think of all the time and effort which we expend in the course of election campaigns to interest people who are living near us with regard to the election—we have the television, the radio, newspapers, and goodness knows what—in order to give them some information as to what the issues are and who the candidates are; and when you consider all these problems we have here, and at the same time we are considering making it easier for many outside the country, or for people temporarily absent from Canada to vote without any of the aged opinions that we try to present in this country, it seems to me that we are getting a bit exercised over a small group of people.

What chances have people living abroad to know—as the people living in Canada know—the issues of an election? What chances have they to know the candidates which I think is a rather important factor in any election? How can they be fully informed? Yet we are going to make it

easier if we adopt this idea. We are going to make it easier for a person outside of Canada to vote than for a person living within Canada.

I would hope that we could give greater attention to this problem before we put it to a vote.

Mr. NOWLAN: I want to agree with what Mr. Churchill has said. We do not want to create in this committee the idea that there is any pressure or rush. I think we may create that feeling. I agree with what Mr. Zaplitny has said. I do not quite appreciate the high standard of intelligence which Mr. Cardin said that the bill distinguished as between the two persons working in London, one for a commercial firm and somebody else working for the Department of External Affairs.

You can admire the intelligence of both. Possibly they may both be living in the same flat. The commercial employee—let us say he is an employee of the Royal Bank—may say; "Why should I be deprived of my vote while you can go and vote?" That will create a discrimination, and I think we should weigh it before we rush into it. What are we sitting around this table for?

You are talking about principle. Everyone of us has to spend a lot of money on the radio, newspapers, political meetings, and what have you, and if this is a principle, we all should sit down and let the voters play with the Ouija board and in that way decide who they will vote for.

There is not only the right to vote but the education of the voter to be considered. I am not reflecting on the standards of intelligence of the voters; but they are deprived of that completely and for these reasons, and for many others that could be brought forward. If this question were to be put to a vote this afternoon, I would vote against it.

Mr. DICKEY: I think Mr. Churchill must have misunderstood the evidence the other morning. As I understood the evidence of Mr. Wershof, it was to the effect that the term of service outside of Canada was normally three years, and that the foreign service officers were brought back for other service in Canada, or recalled to Canada at the end of that time; and that in many cases they were brought back at a time when there was not an election; and that many of them were outside of Canada for a period of service of varying length; and over a period of fifteen or twenty years they would not have a chance of voting in a federal election. That would not mean that they were continually outside of Canada during that time. It is important that that be kept in mind.

Mr. CHURCHILL: There are some who have been kept out of Canada for that length of time, such as trade commissioners.

Mr. DICKEY: No. Every trade commissioner is brought back every six months; and since their appointments are only for outside of Canada, they are made shorter in most cases.

As I see the problem here, the question of principle is very very clear. We either vote for the principle of extending the franchise; to give the privilege of the franchise to Canadians who are outside Canada, or we vote against it.

The arguments raised this afternoon on a supposed basis of principle are not on the principle at all. They are simply on matters of detail as to why the principle should not be extended to certain classes or to certain people, where the difficulties in the extension would make it prohibitive. It is not a question of principle. The principle is clear.

Are we in favour of extending the privilege of the franchise to Canadians who are on government service outside of Canada, or are we not? It is not a question of discrimination; it is not a question of whether we are discriminating against those Canadians or not.

Mr. BOURQUE: I second Mr. Cardin's motion and for this reason: no one would be more pleased than I to have everyone included in the list, no matter where they were, as long as they are Canadian citizens. But having regard to the figures which Mr. Castonguay gave us, it costs about \$6 million now to prepare the list for the voters; and if we extend the privilege of the franchise, it will cost approximately \$30 million. And if we base our revenue in Canada at, let us say, \$4 billion two hundred million, that would mean 1/14th of the total revenue just for the preparation of the list and for voting; and it would mean 7 and 1/7th per cent of the revenue of Canada. For that reason I think Mr. Cardin's motion to include only the federal employees who should be included and at a negligible cost, is the more acceptable, and I think that in supporting Mr. Cardin's motion I am justified by the figures which I have just given.

The CHAIRMAN: All those in favour of the motion will please raise their hands?—8.

The CHAIRMAN: All those contrary?—9.

The CHAIRMAN: I declare the motion lost. The committee is now adjourned.

The committee adjourned.

